E 407
.D612

SPEECH

OF

HON. JOHN A. DIX, OF NEW YORK,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 26, 1848,

On the Bill reported from the Committee on Military Affairs to raise, for a limited time, an additional Military Force.

Mr. DIX said: Mr. President, it was my wish to address the Senate on the resolutions offered by the Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. CALHOUN,] and not on this bill. I should have preferred to do so, because I am always unwilling to delay action on any measure relating to the war, and because the resolutions afford a wider field for inquiry and discussion. But as the debate has become general, and extended to almost every topic that can well be introduced under either, the force of the considerations by which I have been influenced, has become so weakened, that I have not thought it necessary to defer longer what I wish to say.

Two leading questions divide and agitate the public mind in respect to the future conduct of the war with Mexico. The first of these questions is, Shall we withdraw our forces from the Mexican territory, and leave the subject of indemnity for injuries and the adjustment of a boundary between the two Republics to future negotiation, relying on a magnanimous course of conduct on our part to produce a corresponding feeling on the part of Mexico? There are other propositions, subordinate to this, which may be considered as parts of the same general scheme of policy, such as that of withdrawing from the Mexican capital and the interior districts, and assuming an exterior line of occupation. I shall apply to all these propositions the same arguments; and if I were to undertake to distinguish between them, I am not sure that I should make any difference in the force of the application. For whether we withdraw from Mexico altogether, or take a defensive line which shall include all the territory we intend to hold permanently as indemnity, the consequences to result from it, so far as they affect the question of peace, would, it appears to me, be the same.

The second question is, Shall we retain the possession of the territory we have acquired until Mexico shall consent to make a treaty of peace which shall provide ample compensation for the wrongs of which we complain, and settle to our satisfaction the boundary in dispute?

Regarding these questions as involving the permanent welfare of the country, I have considered them with the greatest solicitude; and though never more profoundly impressed with a sense of the responsibility which belongs to the solution of problems of such magnitude and difficulty, my reflections have, nevertheless, led me to a clear and settled conviction as to the course which justice and policy seem to indicate and demand. The first question, in itself of the highest importance, has been answered affirmatively on this floor; and it derives additional interest from the fact, that it has also been answered in the affirmative by a statesman, now retired from the busy scenes of political life, who, from his talents, experience, and public services, justly commands the respect of his countrymen, and whose opinions on any subject are entitled to be weighed with candor and deliberation. I have endeavored to attribute to his opinions, and to those of others who coincide with him wholly or in part, all the importance which belongs to them, and to consider them with the deference due to the distinguished sources from which they emanate. I believe I have done so; and yet I have, after the fullest reflection, come to conclusions totally different from theirs. I believe it would be in the highest degree unjust to ourselves, possessing, as we do, well-founded claims on Mexico, to withdraw our forces from her territory altogether, and exceedingly unwise, as a matter of policy, looking to the future political relations of the two countries, to withdraw from it partially, and assume a line of defence, without a treaty of peace. On the contrary, I am in favor of retaining possession, for the present, of all we have acquired, not as a permanent conquest, but as the most effective means of bringing about, what all most earnestly desire, a restoration of peace; and I will, with the indulgence of the Senate, proceed to state, with as much brevity as the magnitude of the subject admits, my objections to the course suggested by the first question, and my reasons in favor of the course suggested by the other.

I desire, at the outset, to state this proposition, to the truth of which, I think, all will yield their assent: that no policy which does not carry with it a reasonable assurance of healing the dissensions dividing the two countries, and of restoring, permanently, amicable relations between them, ought to receive our support. We may differ in opinion, and, perhaps, hopelessly, as to the measures best calculated to produce this result; but if it were possible for us to come to an agreement in respect to them, the propriety of their adoption could

Printed at the Congressional Globe Office.

D612

scarcely admit of controversy. This proposition being conceded, as I think it will be, it follows, that if the measure proposed—to withdraw our forces from Mexico—be not calculated to bring about a speedy and permanent peace; but, on the contrary, if it be rather calculated to open a field of domestic dissension, and possibly of external interference, in that distracted country, to be followed, in all probability, by a renewal of active hostilities with us, and under circumstances to make us feel severely the loss of the advantage which we have gained, and which it is proposed voluntarily to surrender,—then, it appears to me, it can present no claim to our favorable consideration. I shall endeavor to show, before I sit down, that the policy referred to is exposed to all these dangers and evils.

I do not propose to enter into an examination of the origin of the war. From the moment the collision took place between our forces and those of Mexico on the Rio Grande, I considered all hope of an accommodation, without a full trial of strength in the field, to be out of the question. I believed the peculiar character of the Mexicans would render any such hope illusive. Whether that collision was produced in any degree by our own mistakes, or whether the war itself was brought about by the manner in which Texas was annexed to the Union, are questions I do not propose to discuss now; and if it were not too late, I would submit whether the discussion could serve any other purpose but to exhibit divided councils to our adversary, and to inspire him with the hope of obtaining more favorable terms of peace by protracting his resistance. No one can be less disposed than myself to abridge, in any degree, the legitimate boundaries of discussion. But I am not disposed to enter into such an investigation now. The urgent concern is to know, not how the war originated, not who is responsible for it, but in what manner it can be brought to a speedy and honorable termination; whether, as some suppose, we ought to retire from the field, or whether, as appears to me, the only hope of an accommodation lies in a firm and determined maintenance of our position.

The probable consequences of an abandonment of the advantages we have gained may be better understood by seeing what those advantages are. I speak in a military point of view. While addressing the Senate in February last on an army bill then under consideration, I had occasion to state, that the whole of northern Mexico as far south as the mouth of the Rio Grande and the 26th parallel of latitude was virtually in our possession, comprehending about two-thirds of the territory of that republic, and about one-tenth of its inhabitants. Our acquisitions have since been augmented by the reduction of Vera Cruz and the Castle of San Juan de Ulua, the capture of Jalapa, Perote, and Puebla, the surrender of the city of Mexico, and the occupation of the three States of Vera Cruz, Puebla, and Mexico, with nearly two millions and a half of souls. It is true, our forces have not overrun every portion of the territory of those States; but their chief towns have been reduced, the military forces which defended them captured or dispersed, their civil authorities superseded, their capital occupied, and the whole machinery of government within the conquered States virtually transferred to our hands. All this has been achieved with an army at no one period exceeding fifteen thousand men, and against forces from three to five times more numerous than those actually engaged on our side, in every conflict since the fall of Vera Cruz.

I had occasion, on presenting some army petitions a few weeks ago, to refer to the brilliant successes by which these acquisitions were made; and I will not trespass on the attention of the Senate by repeating what I said at that time.* But I cannot forbear to say, that there is a moral in the contest, the effect of which is not likely to be lost on ourselves or others. At the call of their country our people have literally rushed to arms. The emulation has been to be received into the service, not to be excused from it. Individuals from the plough, the counting-house, the law-office, and the workshop, have taken the field, braving inclement seasons and inhospitable climates without a murmur; and, though wholly unused to arms, withstanding the most destructive fire, and storming batteries at the point of the bayonet with the coolness, intrepidity, and spirit of veterans. I believe I may safely say, there has been no parallel to these achievements by undisciplined forces since the French revolution. I am not sure that history can furnish a parallel. As to the regular army, we always expect it to be gallant and heroic, and we are never disappointed. The whole conduct of the war in the field has exhibited the highest evidence of our military capacity. It con-

---

*The reference alluded to is contained in the following extract:

"I will not detain the Senate by entering into any detailed review of these events with a view to enforce the appeal contained in the petition on the attention. I hope, however, I may be indulged in saying, in justice to those who bore a part in them, that the first conquest of Mexico cannot, as it appears to me, be compared with the second, either as to the obstacles overcome, or as to the relative strength of the invaders. The triumphs of Cortez were achieved by policy and by superiority in discipline and in the implements of warfare. The use of fire-arms, until then unknown to the inhabitants of Mexico, was sufficient in itself to make his force, small as it was, irresistible. In the eyes of that simple and superstitious people he seemed armed with superhuman power. Other circumstances combined to facilitate his success. The native tribes, by whom the country was possessed, were distinct communities, not always acknowledging the same head, and often divided among themselves by implacable hostility and resentments. Cortez, by his consummate prudence and art, turned these dissensions to his own account; he lured the parties to them into his own service, and when he presented himself at the gates of the city of Mexico, he was at the head of four thousand of the most warlike of the natives, as auxiliaries to the band of Spaniards, with which he commenced his march from Vera Cruz. Thus his early successes were as much the triumph of policy as of arms. General Scott, and the gallant band he led, had no such advantages. The whole population of the country, from Vera Cruz to Mexico, was united as one man against him, and animated by the fiercest animosity. He was opposed by military forces armed like his own, often better disciplined, occupying positions chosen by themselves, strong by nature, and fortified according to the strictest rules of art. These obstacles were overcome by his skill as a tactician, aided by a corps of officers unsurpassed for their knowledge of the art of attack and defence, and by the indomitable courage of their followers. With half his force left on the battle-field or in the hospital, and with less than six thousand men, after a series of desperate contests, he took possession of the city of Mexico, containing nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants, and defended by the remnant of an army of more than thirty thousand soldiers. I confess I know nothing in modern warfare which exceeds in brilliancy the movements of the American army from the Gulf to the city of Mexico. I shall not attempt to speak of them in the language of eulogium. They are not a fit theme for such comment. Like the achievements of General Taylor and his brave men on the Rio Grande, at Monterey and Buena Vista, the highest and most appropriate praise is contained in the simplest statement of facts."

firms an opinion I have always held—that a soldier is formidable in ratio of the importance he possesses in the order of the political system of which he is a part. It establishes another position of vital importance to us: that, under the protection of our militia system, the country may, at the termination of every contest, lay aside the more massive and burdensome parts of its armor, and become prepared, with energies renewed by that very capacity, for succeeding scenes of danger.

Mr. President, the political condition of Mexico has been gradually approaching a dissolution of all responsible government, and of the civil order, which constitutes her an independent state. This lamentable situation is not the fruit alone of our military successes. The factions, by which that country has been distracted, each in turn gaining and maintaining a temporary ascendency, and often by brute force, lie at the foundation of the social and political disorder which has reigned there for the last twenty years. To most of the abuses of the old colonial system of Spain, she has superadded the evils of an unstable and irresponsible government. The military bodies, which have been the instruments of those who have thus in succession gained a brief and precarious control over her affairs, though dispersed, still exist, ready to be re-united and to renew the anarchy which we have superseded, for the time being, by a military government: and this brings me to the first great objection to the proposition of withdrawing our armies from the field.

I have already said that no policy can deserve our support which does not hold out the promise of a durable peace. Nothing seems to me more unlikely to secure so desirable a result, than an abandonment of Mexico by us at the present moment without a treaty, leaving behind a strong feeling of animosity towards us, with party divisions as strongly marked, and political animosities as rancorous, perhaps, as they have been at any former period. Even when her capital had fallen, humbled and powerless as she was, party leaders, instead of consulting for the common good, were seen struggling with each other for the barren sceptre of her authority. Our retirement as enemies would, in all probability, be the signal for intestine conflicts as desperate and sanguinary as those in which they have been engaged with us—conflicts always the most disastrous for the great body of the Mexican people, for, on what side soever fortune turns, they are certain to be the victims. You know, sir, there are two great parties in Mexico, (I pass by the minor divisions)—the "Federalistas" and "Centralistas." The former, as their name imports, are in favor of the federative system; they are the true republican party. With us, in former times, the terms "Federal" and "Republican" designated different parties; in Mexico, they are both employed to designate the friends of the federative system. The Centralists are in favor of a consolidated Government, republican or monarchical in form, and are composed of the army, the clergy, and I suppose a small portion of the population. I believe our only hope of obtaining a durable peace lies in the firm establishment of the Federal party in power—the party represented by Herrera, Anaya, Peña y Peña, Cumplido, and others. I understand Herrera has been elected President of the Republic; and this is certainly a favorable indication. But, unfortunately, I fear this party would not succeed in maintaining itself, if Mexico were left to herself at the present moment with an imbittered feeling of hostility towards us. The military chiefs, who controlled the army, and who might rally it again, for political uses, if we were to retire without a treaty, are for the most part enemies of the federative system, and conservators of the popular abuses, to which they owe their wealth and importance. Nothing could be more unfortunate for Mexico than the reëstablishment of these men in power. It would bring with it a hopeless perpetuation of the anarchy and oppression which have given a character to their supremacy in past years—a supremacy without a prospect of amelioration in the condition of the Mexican people—a supremacy of which the chief variation has been an exchange of one military despot for another.

Calamitous as the restoration of this party to their former ascendency would be for Mexico, it would hardly be less so for us. Relying on military force for their support, their policy would be to continue the war as a pretext for maintaining the army in full strength, or, at least, not to terminate it till peace would ensure their own supremacy. It is believed that these considerations have been leading motives in the resistance they have opposed to us. It is true, the republican party has been equally hostile, so far as external indications show; but the fact is accounted for by their desire to see the war continued until the army and its leaders, the great enemies of the federative system, are overthrown. Undoubtedly the obstinate refusal of Mexico to make peace may be very properly referred to the natural exasperation of every people whose soil is invaded; but there can be little doubt that it has been influenced, in no inconsiderable degree, by considerations growing out of party divisions, and the jealousy and animosities to which those divisions have given rise. My confidence in our ability to make an amicable arrangement with the federal party, if it were in undisputed possession of the Government, arises from the belief that their motives are honest, that they have at heart the public welfare, and that they must see there is no hope for Mexico but in a solid peace with us. My utter distrust of the Centralists arises from the belief that their objects are selfish, and that, to accomplish them, they would not hesitate to sacrifice the liberties of the people and the prosperity of the country. But whether I err in these views or not, I feel quite confident I do not err in believing that if our armies were to be withdrawn from Mexico, without a peace, the flames of civil discord would be rekindled in that unhappy country, and burn with redoubled violence. I should greatly fear that the military chiefs would succeed in reëstablishing their ascendency, and that no probable limit could be assigned to the duration of the war. If I am right, our true policy is to stand firm, and, if possible, united, until wiser counsels shall prevail in Mexico, and a disposition shall be shown to come to an amicable arrangement with us on reasonable terms.

The objection I have stated to the proposition of withdrawing our forces from Mexico, concerns only the relations which now exist, or may exist hereafter, between the two countries. If there were no other objection, the question might be decided upon considerations touching only their domestic interests and their mutual rights.

But I come to the second objection—one perhaps of graver import than the first, because it supposes the possibility, if not the probability, of an interference in her affairs by other countries, if we were to retire without a treaty and without commercial arrangements, which it would be in our power to enforce. The President alluded to the subject in his annual message at the opening of Congress, and expressed an apprehension of danger from that source. I participate in it. I shall assign the grounds on which it rests; and I only regret that, in stating them with the minuteness necessary to make them fully understood, I shall be compelled to draw much more largely than I desire on the patience of the Senate.

Senators are doubtless aware that the right of intervention in the affairs of this continent was formally asserted in the French Chamber of Deputies, in the year 1845, by M. Guizot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, as the organ of the Government of France. He regarded the great powers on this continent as divided into three groups, namely: Great Britain, the United States, and the States of Spanish origin; and he declared that it belonged to France "to protect, by the authority of her name, the independence of States, and the equilibrium of the great political forces in America." To this declaration, I have thought it not out of place, in connection with the subject under discussion, to call the attention of the Senate; not for the purpose of undertaking the formal refutation, of which I think the whole doctrine of intervention, as it has been practically enforced in Europe, is clearly susceptible, but for the purpose of denying it as founded upon any well established principles of international law, and, if it had such a foundation, of denying its applicability to the political condition of this continent. To enter fully into the examination of this important subject, would require more time than it would be proper for me to devote to it. I propose only to pass rapidly over a few of the principal considerations it suggests.

The declaration of M. Guizot was the first public and official intimation, by a European government, of an intention to interfere with the political condition of the independent communities on the continent of America, and to influence by moral, if not by physical agencies, their relations to each other. And if it had been presented in any other form than that of an abstract declaration, not necessarily to be followed by any overt act, it would have behooved us to inquire, in the most formal manner, whether this asserted right of interposition derived any justification from the usages of nations, or from the recognized principles of international law; or whether it was not an assumption wholly unsupported by authority, and an encroachment on the independence of sovereign States, which it would have been their duty to themselves and the civilized world to resent as an injury a wrong.

Am I in error in supposing this subject derives new importance from our existing relations with Mexico, one of the states of Spanish origin, which M. Guizot grouped together as constituting one of the great political forces of this continent, among which the "equilibrium" was to be maintained? Sir, more than once, in the progress of the war, the governments of Europe have been invoked, by leading organs of public opinion abroad, to interpose between us and Mexico. Is it not, then, appropriate briefly to state what this right of intervention is, as it has been asserted in Europe, what it has been in practice, and what it would be likely to become, if applied to the States of this continent? I trust it will be so considered.

The doctrine of intervention to maintain the balance of power is essentially of modern origin. From the earliest ages, it is true, occasional combinations have been formed by particular States for mutual protection against the aggressions of a powerful neighbor. History is full of these examples. Such a coöperation is dictated by the plainest principles of self-preservation, for the purpose of guarding against the danger of being destroyed in detail; and it is founded upon such obvious maxims of common sense, that it would have been remarkable if it had not been resorted to from the moment human society assumed a regular form of organization. These defensive alliances were deficient in the permanence and methodical arrangements which distinguish the modern system of intervention. Hume saw, or fancied he saw, in them the principle of the right of intervention to preserve the balance of power which is asserted at the present day. But it could only have been the principle which was developed; they certainly never attained the maturity or the efficient force of a regular system.

The modern doctrine of intervention in the affairs of other States, which has sprung up within the last two centuries, is far more comprehensive in its scope. It has grown into a practical system of supervision on the part of the principal European powers over their own relative forces and those of the other States of Europe; and though it may, in some instances, have been productive of beneficial effects in maintaining the public tranquillity, it has as frequently been an instrument of the grossest injustice and tyranny. From the first extensive coalition of this nature, which was formed during the long series of wars terminated by the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, down to the interference of Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, and France, in the contest between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, in 1840, a period of nearly two centuries—an interference designed, in some degree, to prevent what was regarded as a dangerous protectorate over the affairs of the Porte by Russia—the exercise of the right has been placed, theoretically, on the same high ground of regard for the tranquillity of Europe and the independence of States. Practically, it has often been perverted to the worst purposes of aggrandizement and cupidity.

If we look into the writers on international law, I think we shall find no sufficient ground for the right of intervention. Grotius, who wrote in the early part of the seventeenth century, denied its existence. Fenelon, who wrote about half a century later, denied it, except as a means of self-preservation, and then only when the danger was real and imminent. Vattel, who wrote nearly a century after Fenelon, and a century before our own times, regarded the States of Europe as forming a political system, and he restricted the right of entering into confederacies and alliances for the purpose of intervention in the affairs of each other, to cases in which such combinations were necessary to curb the ambition of any power which, from its superiority in physical strength, and its designs of oppression or conquest, threatened to become danger-

ous to its neighbors. De Martens, who wrote half a century ago, acknowledges, with Vattel, the existence of the right under certain conditions, though he hardly admits it to be well settled as a rule of international law; and he limits its exercise to neighboring states, or states occupying the same quarter of the globe. But, according to the two last writers, who have, perhaps, gone as far as any other public jurists, of equal eminence, towards a formal recognition of the right, it only justifies a union of inferior states within the same immediate sphere of action, to prevent an accumulation of power in the hands of a single sovereign, which would be too great for the common liberty.

I am confident, Mr. President, that no one can rise from a review of the history of modern Europe, and from an examination of the writings of her public jurists, without being satisfied that the right of intervention, as recognized by civilized nations, is what I have stated it to be—a mere right, on the part of weaker states, to combine for the purpose of preventing the subversion of their independence, and the alienation of their territories, by a designing and powerful neighbor; a right to be exercised only in cases of urgent and immediate danger. It is simply a right of self-preservation, undefined, undefinable, having no settled or permanent foundation in public law, to be asserted only in extreme necessity, and when arbitrarily applied to practice, a most fruitful source of abuse, injustice, and oppression. One clear and certain limitation it happily possesses—a limitation which, amid all its encroachments upon the independence of sovereign States, has never until our day been overpassed. By universal consent, by the unvarying testimony of abuse itself, it is not to be exercised beyond the immediate sphere of the nations concerned. It pertains rigidly and exclusively to states within the same circle of political action. It is only by neighbors, for the protection of neighbors against neighbors, that it can, even upon the broadest principles, be rightfully employed. When it traverses oceans, and looks to the regulation of the political concerns of other continents, it becomes a gigantic assumption, which, for the independence of nations, for the interests of humanity, for the tranquillity of the Old World and the New, should be significantly repelled.

Mr. President, a review of the history of Europe during the last two centuries will bring with it another conviction in respect to the right of intervention—that no reliance can be placed on its restriction in practice to the objects to which it is limited by every public jurist who admits its existence at all; and that nothing could be so discouraging to the friends of free government as an extension of the system to this continent, if the power existed to introduce it here. Though the combinations it is claimed to authorize may, in some instances, have protected the coalescing parties from the danger of being overrun by conquering armies, the cases are perhaps as numerous, in which their interposition has been lent to break down the independence of states, and to throw whole communities of men into the arms of governments to which their feelings and principles were alike averse. The right, as has been seen—(and it cannot be too often repeated)—with the utmost latitude claimed for it by any public jurist, goes no further than to authorize a league on the part of two or more weaker states to protect themselves against the designs of an ambitious and powerful neighbor. In its practical application, it has more frequently resulted in a combination of powerful states to destroy their weaker neighbors for the augmentation of their own dominions or those of their allies. From a mere right to combine for self-preservation, they have made it in practice a right to divide, dismember, and partition states at their pleasure—not for the purpose of diminishing the strength of a powerful adversary—but under the pretence of creating a system of balances, which is artificial in its structure, and, in some degree, incongruous in its elements, and which a single political convulsion may overturn and destroy. Do we need examples of the abuse of the power, I will not call it a right? They will be found in the dismemberment of Saxony, the annexation of the republic of Genoa to the kingdom of Sardinia, and the absorption of Venice by Austria. There is another and a more aggravated case of abuse to which recent events have given new prominence. In 1772, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, under the pretence that the disturbed condition of Poland was dangerous to their own tranquillity, seized upon about one-third of her territories, and divided it among themselves. In 1793, notwithstanding her diminished proportions, she had become more dangerous, and they seized half of what they had left to her by the first partition. Sir, she continued to grow dangerous as she grew weak; and in two years after the second partition, they stripped her of all that remained. In 1815, the five great Powers, at the Congress of Vienna, from motives of policy, and not from a returning sense of justice, organized the city of Cracow and a portion of the surrounding territory, with a population of about one hundred thousand souls, into a republic, under the protection of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, with a guarantee of its independence in perpetuity. Russia pledged herself, at the same time, to maintain her share of the spoil, as the kingdom of Poland in name and form, with a constitutional government. She kept her pledge seventeen years, and then virtually incorporated it as an integral part into the Russian empire. The little republic of Cracow was all that remained as a monument of the dismembered kingdom. A year ago, it was obliterated as an independent state by the three great powers of eastern and northern Europe, in violation of their solemn guarantee, and assigned to Austria. The name of Poland, the fountain of so many noble and animating recollections, is no longer to be found on the map of Europe. The three quarters of a century which intervened from the inception to the consummation of this transaction are not sufficient to conceal or even to obscure its true character. The very magnitude of the space over which it is spread only serves to bring it out in bolder and darker relief from the pages of history.

If the United States, in the progress of these usurpations, has not remonstrated against them, and contributed by her interposition to maintain the integrity of the states thus disorganized and dismembered in violation of every rule of right, and every suggestion of justice and humanity, it is because we have been faithful, against all movements of sympathy, against the very instincts of nature, to the principle of abstaining from all interference with the movements of European powers, which relate exclusively to the condition of the

quarter of the globe to which they belong. But when it is proposed or threatened to extend to this continent and to ourselves a similar system of balances, with all its danger of abuse and usurpation, I hold it to be our duty to inquire on what grounds it rests, that we may be prepared to resist all practical application of it to the independent states in this hemisphere.

Mr. President, the declaration of M. Guizot could hardly have been made without the previous approbation of the government, of which he was the organ. The same sovereign occupies the throne of France—the same minister stands before it as the exponent of his opinions. Is the declaration to be regarded as a mere idle annunciation in words of a design never intended to be carried into practice? Let me answer the question by the briefest possible reference to circumstances. France was the coadjutor of England in the attempt to induce Texas to decline annexation to the Union. Failing in this, she attempted to accomplish the same object indirectly, by persuading Mexico to recognize the independence of Texas, on condition that the latter should remain an independent state. These terms were offered to Texas, and rejected. In the year 1844, I believe less than twelve months before M. Guizot's declaration was made, (and the coincidence in point of time is remarkable,) a book on Oregon and California was published in Paris by order of the King of France, under the auspices of Marshal Soult, President of the Council, and M. Guizot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and written by M. de Mofras, who was attached to the French legation in Mexico. The first part of the work is devoted to Mexico, and certainly contains some remarkable passages. He speaks of the establishment of a European monarchy as a project which had been suggested as the only one calculated to put an end to the divisions and annihilate the factions which desolated that beautiful country.* He says the Catholic religion and family relations, with the ancient possessors of the country, would be the first conditions required of the princes, who should be called to reconstruct there a monarchical government. He then adds:

"The infantas of Spain, the French princes, and the archdukes of Austria, fulfil these conditions, and we may affirm that, from whichever quarter a competitor should present himself, he would be unanimously welcomed by the Mexican people.

"What, then, are the interests of France in these questions?

"The establishment in Mexico of a monarchy of any description whatever, resting upon a solid basis, should be the first object of our policy; for we know that the instability attached to the actual form of its government, brings with it disadvantages for our commerce, and inconveniences for our people."

He adds, that if Mexico is to preserve her republican form of government, her incorporation into the Union of the North would seem more favorable to France than her existing condition, on account of the development of commerce and all the guarantees of liberty, security, and justice, which his compatriots would enjoy; and that England would lose, under such an order of things, what France would gain. Thus, though the dismemberment and absorption of Mexico by the United States, are regarded by M. de Mofras as preferable to the commercial monopoly and the "species of political sovereignty," as he denominates it, which England has exercised in that country, the first object of France, according to him, should be a reconstruction of monarchy in Mexico, with a foreign prince on the throne, and this prince from some branch of the Bourbon family. The opinions contained in this book are not put forth as the mere speculations of a private person. They are the opinions of an agent of the government: the publication is made by order of the king, and under the auspices of his two chief ministers, and so stated in the title page. I do not mean to hold the government of France responsible for all the opinions contained in that work; but, can we believe that those I have quoted, concerning as they do so grave a subject as the international relations of France with Mexico, and of Mexico with the United States, would have been put forth without modification under such high official sanctions, if they had been viewed with positive disfavor? It appears to me, that we are constrained to view them, like the declaration of M. Guizot, though certainly to a very inferior extent, as possessing an official character, which we are not at liberty wholly to disregard, when we consider the one in connection with the other.

And now, sir, I ask, do not these opinions and declarations, especially when we look to the open and direct interference of Great Britain and France, by force of arms, in the domestic affairs of some of the South American republics within the last two years, furnish a just ground of apprehension, if we should retire from Mexico without a treaty and as enemies, that it might become a theatre for

* The day after this speech was delivered, Mr. D. received from a friend in New York, who could have had no knowledge of his intention to speak, much less of the topics he designed to discuss, a translation from a speech delivered to the Cortes of Spain on the 1st of December, 1847, by Señor Olozoga, a man of distinction, and supposed to be the same individual who was a few years since first minister of the Crown. By this speech it appears that as recently as 1846, a year after M. Guizot's declaration was made, and two years after M. de Mofras's book was published, large sums were expended by Spain for the purpose of establishing a monarchy in Mexico, and of placing a Spanish prince on the throne. The close connection of the governments of France and Spain by the marriage of the Duke of Montpensier, the son of Louis Philippe, to the sister of Queen Isabella, gives additional importance to these developments:

"No one, either on this floor or elsewhere, can deny that the project has been entertained of establishing a monarchy in Mexico, and to place a Spanish prince on the throne. This project, conceived in the time of the Conde Aranda, would have saved our colonies from the sad fate they have suffered; but brought forward on this occasion, it was the most absurd idea that could have been conceived. But we have not only to deplore having excited political animosities and the consequences this has produced in that country; we have also to lament the money lost and thrown away upon Mexican soil. And in order that the Cortes may not believe I am about to make accusations of so grave a character without possessing proofs to corroborate them, I now hold in my hand a statement of the sums expended and drawn from the treasury in Havana in the year 1846, signed by the Señor Navarro as auditor, and Mujica as treasurer. In this statement there is an item which says: 'Paid bills of exchange remitted by the minister plenipotentiary of her Majesty in Mexico for matters belonging to the service, $100,000.' But much greater than this was the authority our minister in Mexico possessed for disposing of the public funds. I do not know whether he has made use of it. I do not even know his name. I suppose he will employ them with scrupulous honesty; but is the Spanish people so bountifully supplied with millions that they can afford to send them to the New World, for the purpose of sustaining political intrigues in that distant region? How many meritorious military men, who have shed their blood for the good of their country, and whose means of support have been cut down to the lowest possible point, might have been aided by these large sums? How much misery might have been alleviated by the money which has been thrown away in this manner? And where do they find authority for squandering millions to foster foreign intrigues?"

the exercise of influences of a most unfriendly character to us? With the aid of the monarchical party in Mexico, would there not be danger that the avowed design of establishing a throne, might be realized? The chances of open interposition are unquestionably diminished by the results of the war; but I am constrained to believe the chances of secret interference are increased by the avidity imputed to us for territorial extension. Ought not this danger to influence, to some extent, our own conduct, at least so far as to dissuade us from abandoning, until a better prospect of a durable peace shall exist, the advantage we have gained as belligerents? We know a great majority of the Mexican people are radically averse to any other than a republican form of government; but we know, also, the proneness of a people among whom anarchy reigns triumphant, to seek any refuge which promises the restoration of tranquillity and social order.

Mr. President, any attempt by a European power to interpose in the affairs of Mexico, either to establish a monarchy, or to maintain, in the language of M. Guizot, "the equilibrium of the great political forces in America," would be the signal for a war far more important in its consequences, and inscrutable in its issues, than this. We could not submit to such interposition if we would. The public opinion of the country would compel us to resist it. We are committed by the most formal declarations, first made by President Monroe in 1823, and repeated by the present Chief Magistrate of the Union. We have protested, in the most solemn manner, against any further colonization by European powers on this continent. We have protested against any interference in the political concerns of the independent states in this hemisphere. A protest, it is true, does not imply that the ground it assumes is to be maintained at all hazards, and if necessary, by force of arms. Great Britain protested against the interference of France in the affairs of Spain in 1823; she has more recently protested against the absorption of Cracow by Austria as a violation of the political order of Europe, settled at Vienna by the allied sovereigns, and against the Montpensier marriage as a violation of the treaty of Utrecht; but I do not remember that in either case she did anything more than to proclaim to the world her dissent from the acts against which she entered her protest. It has always seemed to me to be unwise in a government to put forth manifestoes without being prepared to maintain them by acts, or to make declarations of abstract principle until the occasion has arrived for enforcing them. The declarations of a President having no power to make war without a vote of Congress, or even to employ the military force of the country except to defend our own territory, is very different from the protest of a sovereign holding the issues of peace and war in his own hands. But the former may not be less effectual when they are sustained, as I believe those of Presidents Monroe and Polk are, in respect to European interference on the American continent, by an undivided public opinion, even though they may not have received a formal response from Congress. I hold, therefore, if any such interposition as that to which I have referred should take place, resistance on our part would inevitably follow, and we should become involved in controversies, of which no man could foresee the end.

Before I quit this part of the subject, I desire to advert to some circumstances recently made public, and, if true, indicating significantly the extent to which Great Britain is disposed to carry her other encroachments on this continent, as in every other quarter of the globe. On the coast of Honduras, in Central America, commonly called the Musquito coast, there is a tribe of Indians bearing the same name, numbering but a few hundred individuals, and inhabiting some miscrable villages in the neighborhood of Cape Gracias a Dios, near the fifteenth parallel of north latitude. Several hundred miles south is the river San Juan, running from Lake Nicaragua to the Caribbean sea, a space of about two degrees of longitude, with the town of Nicaragua at its mouth, and a castle or fort about midway between the town and the lake. The lake is only fifteen leagues from the Pacific, and constitutes, with the river San Juan, one of the proposed lines for a ship canal across the isthmus. Great Britain has recently laid claim to the river San Juan and the town of Nicaragua, if she has not actually taken possession of the latter. I have seen a communication from the British consul-general at Guatemala, asserting the independence of the Mosquitos as a nation. I have also seen a communication from the British consul at Bluefield, on the Mosquito shore, asserting that "the Mosquito flag and nation are under the special protection of the crown of Great Britain," and that "the limits which the British Government is determined to maintain as the right of the King of the Mosquitos" "comprehend the San Juan river." By Arrowsmith's London Atlas, published in 1840, the Mosquito territory covered about 40,000 square miles, nearly as large an area as that of the State of New York; but it did not extend below the twelfth parallel of latitude, while the river San Juan is on the eleventh. I have seen the protest of the State of Nicaragua against the occupation of the town of Nicaragua on the river San Juan, which, as the protest declares, has been from time immemorial in her quiet and peaceable possession. The state of San Salvador, one of the Central American republics, also unites in the protest, and declares her determination, if the outrage shall be carried into effect, to exert her whole power until the usurper "shall be driven from the limits of Central America."

I understand, for I speak only from information, that Great Britain has for some time claimed to have had the Mosquitos, a mere naked tribe of Indians of a few hundred persons, under her protection.* Through her influence they appointed a king, who was taken to Belize, a British station on the bay of Yucatan, and there crowned. It is said, also, that on the decease of the king, he was found to have bequeathed his dominions to her Britannic Majesty. It appears to be certain that she has, under this pretence of protection, extended her dominion over an immense surface in Cen-

*Extract of a letter from the Supreme Government of the State of Nicaragua to the Supreme Government of the State of San Salvador.

"A tribe with no recognized form of government, without civilization, and entirely abandoned to savage life, is suddenly made use of by enlightened England for the purpose of planting one of her feet upon the Atlantic coast of this State; or rather, for the purpose of taking possession of the port for communication between Europe, America, and Asia, and other important countries at the point where the grand inter-oceanic canal is most practicable."

tral America; that she has at least one vessel of war, the Sun, commanded by an officer bearing an English name, "Commander Trotter, of the Mosquito navy," as he is styled in a letter written by the British consul at Bluefield, and that she is still further extending herself, against the remonstrance of the Central American States. But these states, besides being physically weak, are distracted by internal feuds; and if the proceedings complained of be not the unauthorized acts of British agents, which Great Britain will disavow, it is hardly to be expected that a usurpation, so unjustifiably consummated, will be abandoned on an appeal to the justice of the wrong-doer. Whether our government should remain quiescent under this encroachment upon near and defenceless neighbors, is a question worthy of consideration. Under any circumstances, it seems to me to afford little assurance of non-interference with the affairs of Mexico, if our forces were to be withdrawn without a treaty.

There is another consideration which ought not to be overlooked. In July last, Lord George Bentinck made a motion for an address to her Britannic Majesty, praying her to take such measures as she might deem proper to secure the payment of the Spanish government bonds held by British subjects. Those bonds amount to about three hundred and eighty millions of dollars, and on about three hundred and forty millions no interest whatever has been paid; and including this debt nearly seven hundred and thirty millions of dollars are due to British subjects by foreign governments—a sum equal to about one-fifth of her national debt. He contended, that "by the law of nations, from time immemorial, it has been held that the recovery of just debts is a lawful cause of war, if the country from which payment is due refuses to listen to the claims of the country to whom money is owing." He quoted authorities to show that the payment of the debt, or the interest on it, might be enforced without having recourse to arms, though asserting the right to resort to force to compel it. He referred to the rich colonies of Spain, and especially Cuba, to show that there was wealth enough in its annual produce and revenue "to pay the whole debt due by Spain to British bond-holders." He referred to the naval force which Spain possessed to show that there would not be "any very effective resistance," and that "the most timid minister" need not fear it. Having, in the course of his remarks, called the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the subject, Lord Palmerston, in responding to his call, entered into an extended statement in respect to the foreign debt due to British subjects. He drew a distinction between transactions by one government with another, by British subjects with a foreign government, by British subjects with the subjects of another government, and between debts and acts of injustice and oppression. This distinction, however, he treated as matter of expediency and established practice. He assented to the doctrine laid down by the noble lord who made the motion for an address, and he said, if it were the wise policy of England to lay down a rule that she would enforce obligations of this character with the same rigor as those of a different character, she would have a full and fair right, according to the laws of nations, to do so. And he concluded by saying that England had not refrained from taking the steps urged by his noble friend, because she was "afraid of these states, or all of them put together;" that it was not to be supposed the British Parliament, or the British nation, would long remain patient under the wrong, and that they had ample power and means to obtain justice.

I pass over the doctrines put forth in the speech of Lord George Bentinck, and sanctioned by Lord Palmerston, though I believe it not perfectly clear that they can be maintained to the full extent, by an appeal to any well established principles of international law. You know, sir, that we have sometimes found British statesmen, even those holding places nearest to the throne, at fault, both in respect to matters of principle and matters of fact, though it is certainly but justice to concede to them the possession of more enlarged views of policy, combined with greater practical talent and tact, than is often to be found in the councils of European sovereigns. I pass over also an offensive allusion to the failure of two or three of the States of this Union to pay their debts, "as a stain upon the national character," (I use his own language,) when it is well known that the suspension of payment was temporary, and from overruling necessity; that in most instances resumption has taken place; and that, in all, the most earnest efforts have been made to resume the discharge of their obligations. This imputation was cast upon us at the moment when our people, with one heart, were sending abroad their agricultural surplus to feed the famished population of Ireland, not merely in the way of commercial exchange, but in the form of donations, in ship-loads, public and private. And so far as the commercial portion is concerned, I believe our merchants have for months been draining our banks of specie, to send abroad to meet their own pecuniary obligations, while for a time at least they were unable to draw on their debtors in England for the proceeds of the breadstuffs by which her subjects had been fed. But I pass by all this, and come to the important fact that Mexico was among the indebted foreign States enumerated in a report, on which the motion of Lord George Bentinck was founded. What is the extent of her indebtedness I do not know, but I understand about seventy millions of dollars —and I believe it was but recently that the public domain in California was mortgaged to the creditors for a portion of this amount, though the lien is now said to be discharged.

I appeal to honorable Senators to say, with these facts before them—with this public and official assertion of a principle, which, according to Lord Palmerston, the British government has only abstained from practically enforcing through mere considerations of policy—whether, if our forces were withdrawn from Mexico, and that country should become a prey to the anarchy and confusion which has reigned there so long, and which, if renewed, would in all probability become universal and hopeless—whether, I say, there would not be a temptation too strong to be resisted to reduce the principle thus proclaimed to practice? whether some portion of the Mexican territory might not be occupied as a guarantee for the payment of the debt due to British subjects, and thus another principle be violated, which we are committed to maintain? I do not mean to say that this consideration, if it stood alone, should absolutely control our conduct. But as auxiliary to the graver

considerations to which I have referred, it appears to me that it may properly be allowed some weight —enough, sir, perhaps, to turn the scale, if it were already balanced—though, I think, there is sufficient without it to incline us decisively to the side of continued occupation.

Besides, British subjects have other extensive pecuniary interests in Mexico: they have large commercial establishments and heavy investments of capital in the mining districts. If the political affairs of that country should fall into inextricable confusion, it is not to be supposed that these great interests will be abandoned by Great Britain; and yet it is extremely difficult to see by what interposition on her part they could be secured without the danger of collision between her and us.

Mr. President, in what I have said in respect to the danger of foreign interposition, I have not relied upon the ephemeral opinions of the day, or on opinions expressed in public journals abroad, however intimately those journals may be supposed to be connected with governments, as the organs of the views which it is deemed advisable to throw out, from time to time, for the public consideration or guidance. I have resorted to no irresponsible sources. I have presented opinions and declarations proclaimed with more or less of official sanction, and for the most part, with the highest—I mean the declarations of ministers, speaking for their governments to the popular body, and as the responsible representatives of sovereigns, holding in their own hands the authority to enforce, or attempt to enforce, what they proclaim. How far these declarations, taken in connection with the acts referred to, should influence our conduct, is a question on which we may not all agree. But it appears to me that it would be a great error in statesmanship to treat them as wholly unworthy of our consideration. Jealousy of our increasing power, commercial rivalry, political interests, all combine to give them importance. It is the province of a wise forecast to provide, as far as possible, that these adverse influences shall find no theatre for their exercise. To abandon Mexico would, it seems to me, throw wide open all the avenues for their admittance—one power for commercial monopoly, and the other for political control—and perhaps impose on us the difficult and dangerous task of removing evils which a proper vigilance might have prevented.

It may be, Mr. President, that we shall have an early peace. I sincerely hope so. In this case, we must withdraw from Mexico; and it may perhaps be said that the dangers I have referred to as likely to result from our absence at the present moment may possibly be realized. These dangers, whatever they may be, we must incur whenever she shall tender us a peace, which we ought to accept. But there is a wide difference between retiring as belligerents and enemies without a treaty, and as friends under an amicable arrangement, with solemn obligations on both sides to keep the peace. In the former case, probably one of the first acts of Mexico would be to reassemble her army, and her government might fall under the control of her military leaders. In the latter, amicable relations being restored, and military forces being unnecessary, at least to act against us, the peace party would have better hopes of maintaining themselves, of preventing the army, which is now regarded as responsible for the national disasters, from gaining the ascendency, and also of excluding influences from abroad, which would be hostile to her interests and fatal to the common tranquillity of both countries.

In the references I have made to France and Great Britain, I have been actuated by no feeling of unkindness or hostility to either. Rapid and wide-spread as has been the progress of the latter, we have never sought to interfere with it. She holds one-third of the North American continent. She has established her dominion in the Bermudas, the West Indies, and in Guiana, on the South American continent. She holds Belize, on the bay of Yucatan, in North America, with a district of about fourteen thousand square miles, if we may trust her own geographical delineations. We see her in the occupation of territories in every quarter of the globe, vastly, inordinately extended, and still ever extending herself. It is not easy to keep pace with her encroachments. A few years ago the Indus was the western boundary of her Indian empire. She has passed it. She has overrun Affghanistan and Beeloochistan, though I believe she has temporarily withdrawn from the former. She stands at the gates of Persia. She has discussed the policy of passing Persia, and making the Tigris her western boundary in Asia. One stride more would place her upon the shores of the Mediterranean; and her armies would no longer find their way to India by the circumnavigation of Africa. Indeed, she has now, for all government purposes of communication, except the transportation of troops and munitions of war, a direct intercourse with the east. Her steamers of the largest class run from England to Alexandria; from Alexandria there is a water communication with Cairo—some sixty miles; from Cairo it is but eight hours overland to Suez, at the head of the Red Sea; from Suez her steamers of the largest class run to Aden, a military station of hers at the mouth of the Red Sea, from Aden to Ceylon, and from Ceylon to China. She is not merely conquering her way back from Hisdoostan. She has raised her standard beyond it. She has entered the confines of the Celestial Empire. She has gained a permanent foothold within it; and who that knows her, can believe that pretexts will long be wanting to extend her dominion there? Though it is for commerce mainly that she is thus adding to the number and extent of her dependencies, it is not for commerce alone. The love of power and extended empire is one of the efficient principles of her gigantic efforts and movements. No island, however remote, no rock, however barren, on which the cross of St. George has once been unfurled, is ever willingly relinquished, no matter how expensive or inconvenient it may be to maintain it. She may be said literally to encircle the globe by an unbroken chain of dependencies. Nor is it by peaceful means that she is thus extending herself. She propagates commerce, as Mohammedanism propagated religion, by fire and sword. If she negotiates, it is with fleets and armies at the side of her ambassadors, in order to use the language of her diplomacy, "to give force to their representations." She is essentially and eminently a military power, unequalled on the sea and unsurpassed on the land. Happily, the civilization, which distinguishes her at home, goes with her and obliterates some of the bloody traces of her march to unlimited empire.

Much less has any unkind feeling dictated my reference to France. Our relations with her have usually been of the most friendly character. From the foundation of our Government there has existed, on our side, a strong feeling of sympathy in her prosperities and her misfortunes, which no temporary interruption of our friendship has been able to eradicate. There is reason for this feeling: it would not have been creditable to us as a people if it had proved a transient sentiment. She stood forth at a critical period in our contest for independence, and rendered us the most essential service by her coöperation and aid. The swords of Washington and Lafayette were unsheathed on the same battle-fields. Our waters and our plains have been crimsoned with the generous blood of France. The names of Rochambeau, De Grasse, and D'Estaing are identified with our struggles for freedom. They have become, in some degree, American, and we give them to our children as names to be remembered for the gallant deeds of those who bore them. It is not surprising, under such circumstances, that in the survey of the European system, we should have been accustomed to regard France as the power most likely, in the progress of events, to become the rival of England on the ocean as she has been on the land: and with a large portion of our people, if the wish has not been "parent," it has, at least, been companion "to the thought." For this reason, the declaration of M. Guizot was considered, independently of all views of right, as peculiarly ungracious, and as a demonstration of feeling totally inconsistent with the ancient friendship by which the two countries have been united. I have never believed it to be in accordance with the sentiments of the French people. And so strong has been my reliance on their right judgment and feeling, that I confess I have thought it not unlikely that an interposition in our affairs, so completely at variance with amicable relations, which ought to be held sacred, might be arrested by a more decisive interposition at home against its authors.

I repeat, I have spoken in no spirit of unkindness either towards Great Britain or France. I desire nothing but friendship with them—close, cordial, constant, mutually beneficial friendship. I speak of them historically, as they exist and exhibit themselves to the eyes of the civilized world.

Thus far, I have considered the probable consequences of retiring from Mexico, as they are likely to affect our political relations with her, and possibly with other States. I now turn, for a single moment only, to a different class of considerations—I mean considerations arising out of our claims to indemnity for injuries. Although the war was not commenced to secure it, this is one of the avowed objects for which it has been prosecuted. Shall we abandon the position we have taken, and leave this object unaccomplished? Shall we not rather retain what we have acquired, until our just claims are satisfied? To do otherwise would be to have incurred an enormous expenditure of treasure and blood to no purpose—to have prosecuted the war till we had the means of indemnifying ourselves in our own hands, and then voluntarily to relinquish them. Such a course seems to me utterly irreconcilable either with justice to ourselves or with sound policy. If I am not mistaken in the views I have expressed, it would be an abandonment of indemnity without getting rid of the war, on which we must now rely to procure it. These considerations do not apply to the policy suggested by the honorable Senator from South Carolina. He proposes to take indemnity into our own hands by occupying a portion of northern or central Mexico, and holding it without a treaty. My remarks are only applicable to the policy of withdrawing from Mexico altogether, and leaving the adjustment of differences to future negotiations.

Having thus declared myself in favor of the occupation of Mexico until she shall consent to make peace, I deem it proper to say, in connection with this subject, that I have been uniformly opposed, and that I am still opposed, to all schemes of conquest for the acquisition of territory. In this respect, I concur in what the Senator from South Carolina has said, and for nearly the same reasons. I am opposed to all such schemes, because they would be inconsistent with the avowed objects of the war; because they would be incompatible with justice and sound policy; and because, if successful, they would be utterly subversive of the fundamental principle of our political system, resting as it does on a voluntary association of free and independent States. I have been uniformly in favor of the most energetic measures in the prosecution of the war, because I believed them most likely to bring it to a close. In carrying our arms to the enemy's capital and occupying his territory, I can see nothing inconsistent with the principles of justice or the usages of civilized States. In the prosecution of a war undertaken to procure a redress of injuries, the territories or property of an enemy may be seized for the express purpose of compelling him to do justice. More may be taken than would constitute a fair indemnity for actual injuries, provided it be done with the intention of restoring the surplus when he shall consent to make peace on reasonable terms. It is in this spirit, and with this intention, that my coöperation has been given to the vigorous prosecution of the war. We have a right to insist on a fair boundary; we may exact indemnity for injuries; we may demand indemnification for the expenses of the war, if we please. But here all right ceases; and if, when this is conceded, we have more on our hands, we are bound, on every principle of law and good conscience, to make restitution. It is admitted on all hands that Mexico is incapable of indemnifying us in money. But she may do so by ceding to us territory which is useless to her, which she has not the ability to defend, and which may be useful to us. I have always been in favor of acquiring territory on just terms. The acquisition of California has always appeared to me very desirable, on account of its ports on the Pacific. I have uniformly voted for acquiring it, when the proposition has come before us. I believe, on the first occasion, I was in a minority of ten or eleven. My opinion is unchanged. Indeed, it is confirmed by the fact, that California has, by our military operations, become forever detached from Mexico. If it were to be abandoned by us, its forty thousand inhabitants would undoubtedly establish an independent government for themselves, and they would maintain it if undisturbed by foreign interference. I take the actual condition of things as I find it, and with an earnest desire to fulfil all the obligations it devolves on us in a spirit of justice towards Mexico and towards the people of California.

I concur also in what the honorable Senator from South Carolina has said in relation to the influence of war on our political institutions. No man can deplore it under any circumstances, more than myself. Independently of the evils which it always brings in its train, there are considerations connected with our political organization and the nature of our social progress, which render it doubly pernicious in its tendencies. The final success of the experiment we are making in free government may depend, in some degree, on a steady maintenance of the spirit of peace, in which our political system had its origin, and in which it has thus far been administered. Great as is our capacity for war, our whole scheme of government is averse to it. The greatest possible economy in expenditure; the least possible patronage in the hands of the Executive; the smallest pecuniary exactions from the people, consistent with our absolute wants; the absence of all demands on the public treasury, which call for unusual contributions of revenue or promote excessive disbursements; the exemption of the country from all exigencies which devolve on the legislative and executive departments of the government the exercise of extraordinary powers;—these are the conditions under which the ends of our political organization are most likely to be fulfilled. Sir, none of these conditions belong to a state of war. Extravagant disbursements; extraordinary contributions of revenue, present or prospective—present, in augmented burdens of taxation, prospective, in the shape of loans and anticipations of income, leading ultimately to taxation; extraordinary powers summarily, and sometimes arbitrarily exercised;—these are the inseparable companions of war; and they are inimical to the very genius of our social system.

There are considerations, which, in my judgment, render a war with Mexico peculiarly unfortunate, and which justify all the efforts we have made to bring it to an amicable termination. We are mutually engaged in carrying out on this continent the experiment of free government, which in all other ages has proved abortive. We are trying it under eminently auspicious circumstances. We have no strong Governments around us, founded upon antagonist principles, and adverse in their example and influence to the success of ours. We are sustained by the faculty of popular representation, which was unknown, or at least imperfectly known, to the free states of antiquity, and by force of which we have been enabled to carry out, on geographical areas of indefinite extent, an organization which had previously been deemed applicable only to communities of limited population and territory. It is natural, under these circumstances, that the friends of free government, wherever they are to be found, should turn to us as the last hope of liberal institutions. They look to us for examples of moderation and forbearance in our intercourse with foreign nations—especially those having forms of government analogous to our own—and for an exemption from the evil passions which have embroiled the countries of the Old World, and involved them, century after century, with brief intermissions, in wars of ambition and revenge. In asserting the superiority of our own form of government, the strength of the argument will be weakened, if we shall be found no more exempt than those, which are less popular, from strife and contention with neighboring States. Regarding the success of our institutions as affecting deeply the welfare of our race, and vindicating the competency of mankind to self-government, I have always esteemed it peculiarly unfortunate that any cause of alienation should have existed of sufficient magnitude to induce the two principal republics of the western hemisphere to turn their arms against each other. The cause of liberal government is injured, and far more deeply injured, than it has been by the dissension of the republics in the southern portion of the American continent.

These are considerations which it were well for us always to keep in view—in peace, that we may not rush hastily into war; in war, that we may spare no honorable effort for a restoration of peace.

There is yet another consideration of a kindred character. While the monarchies of Europe are at peace with each other, and social improvement is advancing, on the continent at least, with unparalleled rapidity, almost the only wars now waging among neighboring States are between us and Mexico, and between some of the South American republics. I desire, as much as any one can, to see these dissentions composed, and to see these republican States resume the fulfilment of their great mission among the nations—the maintenance of the principles of political liberty, and the cultivation of the arts of civilization and peace.

In these views I concur with the Senator from South Carolina. But here I am constrained to separate from him. When we come to practical measures, our paths lie wide apart.

It is for the very reasons I have just stated, that I cannot assent to the policy he proposes. I believe it calculated to prolong the war, not to terminate it; to keep alive the spirit of animosity which divides us from Mexico, instead of restoring the friendly relations which ought to exist between us. I am in favor, then, of standing as we are. And, sir, if she shall refuse to make peace; if we must continue in the occupation of her capital and three-fourths of her territory, it may be in the order of Providence that we shall, through this very necessity, become the instruments of her political and social regeneration. In the party conflicts which distract her, the means may be found of consolidating her government on a republican basis, of healing her dissensions, and of uniting her to us in bonds of friendship by an exercise of magnanimity and forbearance in the final adjustment of our difficulties with her. I believe even now something of the salutary influence of our presence in her capital and principal sea-ports, begins to be felt. The abolition of transit duties, the reduction of the impost on foreign articles of necessity and convenience, and a freer commerce among the Mexican States, may, if continued, strike a fatal blow at the anti-commercial system by which her people have been oppressed, and the internal abuses by which her rulers have grown rich—a system of mal-administration not even equalled by that which exists in old Spain. The higher improvement in government, in the arts, and in civilization under all its forms, which distinguishes our own people, may, by force of actual contact, be communicated to the Mexicans, and lay the foundation of an improved social order. Startling as the reflection is, it is nevertheless true, that civilization, and even christianity, have

sometimes been propagated by arms, where they would otherwise have been hopelessly excluded. Thus, the very passions which seem fitted only to desolate human society, may, in the hands of Providence, become the agents of its advancement. Let us, then, hope and trust that the contest in which we are engaged with a neighboring power, deplorable as we all consider it, may be an instrument of social and political amelioration to our adversary.

The Senator from South Carolina has said, in his emphatic language, that we are "tied to a corpse." It is a striking figure, Mr. President, and partakes strongly of the boldness in which the illustrations of that distinguished Senator are always conceived. Mexico is, indeed, prostrate—almost politically inanimate, if you please—under the oppressions which have been heaped upon her, year after year, by unscrupulous rulers. But I should be sorry to believe her beyond the power of resuscitation, even by human means. I do not expect, as our contact with her becomes more intimate, to see her, like the dead body touched by the bones of the prophet, spring, at a single bound, to life and strength. But I hope to see her—possibly through our instrumentality—freed from the despotic sway of her military rulers, and rising, by sure degrees, to the national importance I wish her to possess—order and tranquillity first, next social improvement and stable government, and at last an honorable rank among the nations of the earth. I contemplate no direct interference with her government—no permanent system of protection to be exercised over it—no alliance with her beyond what may be necessary to secure to us the objects of peace. But I do contemplate a treaty, stipulating for commercial arrangements, for protection and security to our own citizens in their future intercourse with her, and no withdrawal of our forces without it, at least until all chance of obtaining one shall prove hopeless. If we were to retire now, all commerce between her and us would cease and be transferred to our rivals, our frontier would be a line of war, not a boundary between peaceful neighbors; and unless the tide of conquest should be poured back upon her under the provocations such a condition of our relations would almost necessarily superinduce, no citizen of the United States could be expected, for years to come, to plant his foot on Mexican soil. War dissolves the political and commercial relations of independent States, so far as they rest upon voluntary agreement. It is only by a treaty of peace that they can be revived, or new relations be substituted for the old.

Mr. President, advocating as I do the occupation of Mexico until she shall consent to make peace, it may be incumbent on me to state in what manner I think it can best be maintained. And here I must say, I think the estimates of the effective force in the field have been greatly overstated. I propose no specific plan for adoption. I leave all practical measures in the hands of those to whom they belong. I only purpose to state what suggests itself to my mind, as advisable. I think we should find it most advantageous to remain much as we are, excepting to occupy such ports on the Pacific as our fleet may reduce and maintain as commercial avenues to the interior. It may, however, become necessary to occupy San Luis Potosi and Zacatecas for the protection of the mining operations in those States, and the agricultural districts near the city of Mexico, to command supplies for the army. I should consider an army of twenty-five thousand well-disciplined, effective men, the smallest number adequate to the purpose of maintaining positions, keeping open communications from the coast to the interior, and dispersing the enemy's troops if they shall be reëmbodied; but in order to keep up such a force, we should require a nominal organization of at least forty thousand men, with full thirty thousand under pay. Without the general staff, the twenty-five regiments of regulars now in service, and the ten new regiments proposed by the bill, will constitute such a force; and when the latter shall be raised and brought into the field, a portion of the volunteers may be discharged, if it shall be found prudent to do so. Many of the regiments are greatly reduced in numbers, and, as I understand, are anxious to return home. I doubt now whether there are more than twenty-five thousand effective men in all Mexico, though the rolls show over forty thousand. [General Cass, chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, here said, the Adjutant General was of opinion that they did not exceed twenty-four thousand.] Some of the returns, on which the Adjutant General's report is founded, are of as early a date as August last. It will be recollected that last summer, when there was great anxiety in relation to General Scott, statements of the number of his troops were published here. They were founded on the returns in the Adjutant General's office—and in his official report of the battles before the city of Mexico, General Scott complained that his force had been greatly overstated. He said it had been "trebled" in these returns, if I recollect rightly, and that the army had been "disgusted" by the exaggeration. The returns of the army now should, in like manner, be subjected to great deductions in order to obtain the real effective force. If the ten regiments proposed by the bill are authorized, months will be required to raise them; they will not probably, as the chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs has stated, give many more than seven thousand men, and in the mean time the army will become constantly diminished by the casualties of service. For these reasons, and for those given—and so ably given—some days since by my honorable friend from Mississippi, [Mr. Davis,] I support the bill. I support it for another reason, which has governed me from the commencement of the war: to place at the control of the Executive the men and means deemed necessary to bring it to an honorable termination.

As hostilities are now suspended, the chief province of the army will be to maintain internal tranquillity, support the civil authorities in the execution of the laws, to free the country from the robber and guerrilla bands by which it is infested, and subserve the great purposes of government by affording security to liberty, property, and life—a security the Mexicans have not often fully enjoyed. The very exercise of these beneficent agencies will tend to disarm hostility towards us with the thinking portion of the population. It will place our armies in a most favorable contrast with hers, which have been scourges rather than protectors to their own countrymen. I would, if possible, have no more bloodshed. I would make our armies the protectors, not the enemies of the Mexican people, and

render them subservient to the eradication of abuses and to the institution of a better civil administration, under Mexican magistrates, abstaining from all interference with the frame of the government, and changing in its action only what, by universal consent, requires to be changed. If this course were to be adopted and steadily pursued, I should earnestly hope its effect would be, at no distant time, to make the capital, under our protection, the centre of an influence which would lead to the reëstablishment of the federative system on a durable basis, and give to that distracted country the settled order which is alone necessary to make her happy and prosperous.

To abandon the city of Mexico would, I fear, put an end to all these prospects and hopes. That city is the political as well as the financial centre of the Republic. It is there governments have been instituted and deposed, armies levied, revenue systems devised and carried into execution. So long as we hold it and control the adjoining districts, I believe nothing but imprudence or mismanagement can raise up a formidable opposition to us. If we abandon it, all the resources of the country, which it commands, will again be at the control of its rulers, to be employed against us in the renewal of active hostilities. Before it was captured, energetic movements seemed to me our true policy. Now that it is in our undisputed possession, our leading object should be to introduce better commercial and financial systems, and let them work out under our protection their legitimate results.

Great qualities are necessary in him who is charged with the execution of these delicate and responsible functions. He should have prudence, self-control, a knowledge of civil affairs, of the country, of the people, and their character, and, if possible, their language. Established institutions, existing usages, sometimes prejudices, even, must be respected. Some of the most disastrous reverses which have befallen armies of occupation, have had their origin in violations of the prevailing customs and feelings of the people. To avoid this fatal error, everything depends on the discretion and wisdom of the directing authority.

It may be, that all reasonable expectations will be disappointed; that the hostility of Mexico will prove unappeasable; that she will prefer the political disorganization, which now exists, to an amicable arrangement with us. If so, circumstances must dictate the course to be pursued when this conviction shall be forced on us. But, sir, let us not adopt such a conclusion hastily. Let us rely on the influence of more rational motives to give us peace.

And now, sir, I submit whether this course had not better be pursued for a while, if I am right in supposing the temporary occupation of Mexico, under discreet officers, may lead to a stable peace, rather than to withdraw our forces, and leave the adjustment of difficulties to the uncertain chance of a restoration of a responsible government, to be terminated at last, perhaps, by the renewed arbitrement of arms.

I have thus stated with frankness the views I entertain in respect to the future conduct of the war. Notwithstanding the anxious consideration I have given to the subject, they may be erroneous. It is a question of great difficulty, on which differences of opinion may well exist, and on which a mistaken course of policy may lead to the most unpleasant consequences. Whatever faith I may entertain in the soundness of the opinions I have advanced, I certainly should have more if they were not totally at variance with those of gentlemen possessing, from longer experience, much higher claims than myself to public confidence. But I have not on this account thought proper to withhold them, knowing, as we do, that, from the very contrariety and conflict of thought and conviction, valuable deductions may sometimes be drawn.

Mr. President, I feel that I have already trespassed too long on the indulgence of the Senate; but I am unwilling to close without asking its attention for a very few moments to some considerations connected with our future growth and progress, and with the influence we must, in spite of ourselves, exert over the destinies of Mexico. They are no new opinions: they have been expressed years ago, both in public and private.

Sir, no one who has paid a moderate degree of attention to the laws and elements of our increase, can doubt that our population is destined to spread itself across the American continent, filling up, with more or less completeness, according to attractions of soil and climate, the space that intervenes between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This eventual, and, perhaps, in the order of time, this not very distant extension of our settlements over a tract of country, with a diameter, as we go westward, greatly disproportioned to its length, becomes a subject of the highest interest to us. On the whole extent of our northern flank, from New Brunswick to the point where the northern boundary of Oregon touches the Pacific, we are in contact with British colonists, having, for the most part, the same common origin with ourselves, but controlled and moulded by political influences from the Eastern hemisphere, if not adverse, certainly not decidedly friendly to us. The strongest tie which can be relied on to bind us to mutual offices of friendship and good neighborhood, is that of commerce; and this, as we know, is apt to run into rivalry, and sometimes becomes a fruitful source of alienation.

From our northern boundary, we turn to our southern. What races are to border on us here, what is to be their social and political character, and what their means of annoyance? Are our two frontiers, only seven parallels of latitude apart when we pass Texas, to be flanked by settlements having no common bond of union with ours? Our whole southern line is conterminous, throughout its whole extent, with the territories of Mexico, a large portion of which is nearly unpopulated. The geographical area of Mexico is about 1,500,000 square miles, and her population about 7,000,000 souls. The whole northern and central portion, taking the twenty-sixth parallel of latitude as the dividing line, containing more than 1,000,000 square miles, has about 650,000 inhabitants—about two inhabitants to three square miles. The southern portion, with less than 500,000 square miles, has a population of nearly six and a half millions of souls, or thirteen inhabitants to one square mile. The aboriginal races, which occupy and overrun a portion of California and New Mexico, must there, as everywhere else, give way before the advancing wave of civilization, either to be overwhelmed by it, or to be driven upon perpetually contracting areas, where, from a diminution of

their accustomed sources of subsistence, they must ultimately become extinct by force of an invincible law. We see the operation of this law in every portion of this continent. We have no power to control it, if we would. It is the behest of Providence that idleness, and ignorance, and barbarism, shall give place to industry, and knowledge, and civilization. The European and mixed races, which possess Mexico, are not likely, either from moral or physical energy, to become formidable rivals or enemies. The bold and courageous enterprise which overran and conquered Mexico, appears not to have descended to the present possessors of the soil. Either from the influence of climate or the admixture of races—the fusion of castes, to use the technical phrase—the conquerors have, in turn, become the conquered. The ancient Castilian energy is, in a great degree, subdued; and it has given place, with many other noble traits of the Spanish character, to a peculiarity which seems to have marked the race in that country, under whatever combinations it is found—a proneness to civil discord, and a suicidal waste of its own strength.

With such a territory and such a people on our southern border, what is to be the inevitable course of empire? It needs no powers of prophecy to foretell. Sir, I desire to speak plainly: why should we not, when we are discussing the operation of moral and physical laws, which are beyond our control? As our population moves westward on our own territory, portions will cross our southern boundary. Settlements will be formed within the unoccupied and sparsely-peopled territory of Mexico. Uncongenial habits and tastes, differences of political opinion and principle, and numberless other elements of diversity will lead to a separation of these newly-formed societies from the inefficient government of Mexico. They will not endure to be held in subjection to a system, which neither yields them protection nor offers any incentive to their proper development and growth. They will form independent States on the basis of constitutions identical in all their leading features with our own; and they will naturally seek to unite their fortunes to ours. The fate of California is already sealed: it can never be reunited to Mexico. The operation of the great causes, to which I have alluded, must, at no distant day, detach the whole of northern Mexico from the southern portion of that republic. It is for the very reason that she is incapable of defending her possessions against the elements of disorder within and the progress of better influences from without, that I desire to see the inevitable political change which is to be wrought in the condition of her northern departments, brought about without any improper interference on our part. I do not speak of our military movements. I refer to the time when our difficulties with her shall be healed, and when she shall be left to the operation of pacific influences—silent, but more powerful than the arm of force. For the reason that she is defencelsss, if for no other, I should be opposed to all schemes of conquest. Acquisition by force is the vice of arbitrary governments. I desire never to see it the reproach of ours. For the sake of the national honor, as well as the permanency of our political institutions, I desire not to see it. The extension of free government on this continent can only be arrested, if arrested at all, by substituting war for the arts of peace. Leave it to itself, and nothing can prevent the progress of our population across the continent. Mr. Jefferson, with his prophetic forecast, foretold this result forty years ago. He prophesied the peaceful progress of our people to the Pacific. He foresaw them forming new settlements, and, when strong enough to maintain themselves, organizing independent societies and governing themselves by constitutions and laws analagous to our own. It is true, he believed the area of freedom might be enlarged, advantageously to ourselves and others, without extending to the same broad limits the area of our jurisdiction. It was the progress and the triumph of great principles of political right, to which his philosophical mind instinctively turned as to the legitimate aim and boundary of our ambition and desires. Since his day the public mind in this country has greatly outrun his anticipations of our progress. It looks to the extension of our Constitution and laws over regions which were formerly considered beyond our reach as integral portions of the same system of government. Modern improvements have given great strength to this prevailing sentiment. It is possible by steam power, if we can succeed in making the proper application of it, over so broad a surface, to reach the Pacific ocean from Lake Michigan, or the Mississippi, in eight or nine days—a period of time less than that which was required to travel from Boston to Philadelphia, when the Congress of the American colonies first assembled in the latter city. Under these circumstances, the extension of our political boundary so as to embrace all territory we may justly call our own, seems no longer to be considered a questionable policy. If other districts, not now within the territories of the Union, shall found independent governments, and shall desire to unite themselves to us on terms mutually acceptable, it is a question which concerns only them and us, and in which no stranger can be permitted to intrude. When the time comes for the settlement of any such questions, they will doubtless be considered with all the solemnity which belongs to propositions involving the public welfare. To those with whom the decision belongs let us leave them, with the assurance that the wisdom which has governed and guided us so long, will still point out to us the path of liberty, tranquillity and safety.

One position we have assumed, and I trust it will be maintained with inflexible firmness—that no Power beyond this continent can be permitted to interfere with our progress, so long as there is on our part no violation of its own rights. I would resist, at the outset, as matter of the gravest offence, all indications of such interference. If the abstract right could be asserted on grounds of international law, there has been nothing in the nature of our extension, or the means by which it has been accomplished, to warrant its application to us. From the formation of our Government, for nearly three-quarters of a century, military power—brute force—has had no agency in the conquests we have achieved. We have overrun no provinces or countries abounding in wealth. Our capital has witnessed no triumphal entries of returning armies, bearing with them the spoils and trophies of conquest. Our ships have not been seen returning from subjugated districts, freighted with the tributes of an extended commerce. In the extension of our commercial intercourse, we have not, like our Anglo-Saxon mother, been seen

hewing down with the sword, with unrelenting and remorseless determination, every obstacle which opposed itself to her progress. Our career thus far has been stained by no such companionship with evil. Our conquests have been the peaceful achievements of enterprise and industry—the one leading the way into the wilderness, the other following and completing the acquisition by the formal symbols of occupancy and possession. They have looked to no objects beyond the conversion of uninhabited wilds into abodes of civilization and freedom. Their only arms were the axe and the ploughshare. The accumulations of wealth they have brought were all extracted from the bosom of the earth by the unoffending hand of labor. If, in the progress of our people westward, they shall occupy territories not our own, but to become ours by amicable arrangements with the governments to which they belong, which of the nations of the earth shall venture to stand forth, in the face of the civilized world, and call on us to pause in this great work of human improvement? It is as much the interest of Europe as it is ours, that we should be permitted to follow undisturbed the path which, in the allotment of national fortunes, we seem appointed to tread. Our country has long been a refuge for those who desire a larger liberty than they enjoy under their own rulers. It is an outlet for the political disaffection of the Old World—for social elements which might there have become sources of agitation, but which are here silently and tranquilly incorporated into our system, ceasing to be principles of disturbance as they attain the greater freedom, which was the object of their separation from less congenial combinations in other quarters of the globe. Nay, more: it is into the vast reservoir of the western wilderness, teeming with fruitfulness and fertility, that Europe is constantly pouring, under our protection, her human surplusses, unable to draw from her own bosom the elements of their support and reproduction. She is literally going along with us in our march to prosperity and power, to share with us its triumphs and its fruits. Happily, this continent is not a legitimate theatre for the political arrangements of the sovereigns of the eastern hemisphere. Their armies may range, undisturbed by us, over the plains of Europe, Asia, and Africa, dethroning monarchs, partitioning kingdoms, and subverting republics, as interest or caprice may dictate. But political justice demands that in one quarter of the globe self-government, freedom, the arts of peace, shall be permitted to work out, unmolested, the great purposes of human civilization

Mr. President, I trust there will be nothing in the final adjustment of our difficulties with Mexico to impair, in any degree, the moral of our example in the past. Our course, heretofore, has been one of perpetual exertion to bring about an amicable arrangement with her. I trust we shall persevere in the same course of conduct, whatever unwillingness she may exhibit to come to terms. Entertaining the opinions which I have expressed, I naturally feel a deep solicitude, as an American citizen, that our public conduct should comport with the dignity of the part we seem destined to perform in the great drama of international politics. I desire to see our good name unsullied, and the character we have gained for moderation, justice, and scrupulousness in the discharge of our national obligations, maintained unimpaired. In these, let us be assured, our great strength consists: for it is these which makes us strong in the opinion of mankind.

In what I have said concerning the progress of our people over the unpopulated regions west of us, and in respect to our responsibilities as a nation, I trust I shall have incurred no imputation of inconsistency. On the contrary, I trust I shall be considered consistent in all I have said. I regard our extension, as I have endeavored to foreshadow it, to be the inevitable result of causes, the operation of which it is not in our power to arrest. At the same time, I hold it to be our sacred duty to see that it is not encouraged or promoted by improper means. While I should consider it the part of weakness to shrink from extension, under the apprehension that it might bring with it the elements of discord and disunion, as our political boundaries are enlarged, I should hold it to be the part of folly and dishonor to attempt to accelerate it by agencies incompatible with our obligations to other nations. It is the dictate of wisdom and of duty to submit ourselves to the operation of the great causes which are at work, and which will work on in spite of us, in carrying civilization and freedom across the American continent.

In advocating a continued occupation of the cities and territory we have acquired in Mexico, until she shall assent to reasonable terms of peace, I trust also that I shall be deemed consistent with myself. Deprecating war as the greatest of calamities, especially for us, I desire to see this war brought to a close at the earliest practicable day. I am in favor of whatever measures are most likely to accomplish this desirable end. I am opposed to an abandonment of our position:

1st. Because I believe it would open a field of domestic dissension in Mexico, which might be fatal to her existence as an independent state, or make her take refuge in the arms of despotism;

2d. Because it might lead to external interference in her affairs of the most dangerous tendency both to her and us; and

3d. Because I fear that we should only gain a temporary suspension of hostilities, to be renewed under great disadvantages to us, and with every prospect of a longer and more sanguinary contest.

Mr. President, it is this last consideration, which weighs most heavily upon my own mind. I hold it to be indispensable to the public welfare, under all its aspects, that we should have, at the termination of this contest, a solid and stable peace. Unpromising as the condition of things seems at the present moment, my hope still is, that firmness tempered with prudence, will give us, not a mere outward pacification with secret irritation rankling within, but substantial concord and friendship, which shall leave no wound unhealed. And, sir, we should be satisfied with nothing short of an accommodation of differences which will enable the country with confidence to lay aside its armor, and to resume the peaceful pursuits to which, by the inexorable law of our condition, we must look for prosperity and safety.

My advice, then, (if I may presume to advise,) is, to stand firm, holding ourselves ready at all times to make a peace, and carrying into our negotiations for that purpose a determination to cement a future good understanding with our adversary, by an adjustment of our differences on terms of justice, moderation, and magnanimity.

5504 W26

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS